

**SENATE—Tuesday, February 13, 2001**

The Senate met at 9:32 a.m. and was called to order by the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island.

**PRAYER**

The Chaplain, Dr. Lloyd John Ogilvie, offered the following prayer:

Almighty God, before us is a brand new day filled with opportunities to live out our calling as servant leaders. We trust You to guide us so that all that we do and say today will be for Your glory.

Since we will pass through this day only once, if there is any kindness we can express, any affirmation we can communicate, any help we can give, free us to do it today. Help us to be sensitive to what is happening to people around us. May we take no one for granted, but instead, be communicators of Your love and encouragement.

We express gratitude for all the people who make this Senate function effectively. Especially today, we thank You for the caring, servant leadership exemplified by Loretta Symms who has just retired as Deputy Sergeant at Arms. We praise You for her commitment to excellence, her 22 years service to the Senate, and her friendship to Senators and staff alike. Bless her as she moves on to the next phase of Your strategy for her life.

Now, Lord, You have richly blessed this Senate so that You may bless this Nation through its inspired leadership. In Your Holy Name we pray. Amen.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**APPOINTMENT OF ACTING PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE**

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will please read a communication to the Senate from the President pro tempore [Mr. THURMOND].

The legislative clerk read the following letter:

U.S. SENATE,  
PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE,  
Washington, DC, February 13, 2001.

To the Senate:

Under the provisions of rule I, paragraph 3, of the Standing Rules of the Senate, I hereby appoint the Honorable LINCOLN CHAFEE, a Senator from the State of Rhode Island, to perform the duties of the Chair.

STROM THURMOND,  
President pro tempore.

Mr. CHAFEE thereupon assumed the chair as Acting President pro tempore.

**RECOGNITION OF THE ACTING MAJORITY LEADER**

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The acting majority leader is recognized.

**SCHEDULE**

Mr. NICKLES. Mr. President, today the Senate will be in a period of morning business until 12:30 p.m. At 12:30, the Senate will recess for the weekly party conferences. When the Senate reconvenes at 2:15 p.m., there will be an additional period for morning business. This afternoon the Senate may begin consideration of any executive or legislative items available for action. Senators will be notified as votes are scheduled for the week.

I thank my colleagues for their attention.

**RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME**

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

**MORNING BUSINESS**

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, there will now be a period for the transaction of morning business not to extend beyond the hour of 12:30 p.m.

Under the previous order, the time until 11 a.m. shall be under the control of the Democratic leader or his designee.

Mr. NICKLES. I thank the Chair.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from New York.

Mrs. CLINTON. I yield myself 15 minutes of the time controlled by the Democrats.

**HEALTH INSURANCE**

Mrs. CLINTON. Mr. President, yesterday I was in Rome and Watertown, NY, to speak with members of the Rotary Clubs and chambers of commerce about the upstate New York economy and how we can work together to promote investment and job creation in these communities. I will carry their concerns about the economy to the Budget Committee on which I am pleased to serve and where we are fashioning the framework for the next Federal budget.

We are hearing about surplus projections and words of caution, about how

much faith to place in them. We are hearing about President Bush's tax cut plans and words of caution from colleagues who voted for big tax cuts in the early 1980s, cuts which helped contribute to the ruinous deficits and high interest rates that hobbles our Nation's capacity to create jobs, invest in people, and pay down our national debt. The budget resolution we create sets the stage for how much we can invest in health care, schools, and the other pressing needs of families throughout our country. Later this week, I will return to the floor to talk about the budget in greater detail.

Today I would like to discuss a topic that transcends party, geography, and ideology. It is an issue that is important to the people in Rome and Watertown, Rochester and Brooklyn, and everywhere I have been in recent weeks. It will be foremost in my mind as the outlines of the 2002 budget take shape; that is, improving access to quality, affordable health care for New Yorkers, for all Americans, and especially for our children.

In this session of Congress, we will need to focus on many aspects of health care, medical privacy, Medicaid funding, genetic discrimination, providing prescription drug coverage for our seniors, and long-term care for our families, among others. Today I will talk about the importance of insuring more Americans, particularly our children, and protecting the rights of those who are insured.

In all corners of New York, I have met countless people who have told me powerful stories of the cruel inequities of our health care system. Last August, at the Dutchess County Fair, a single mother told me how hard it was to keep her family afloat because her medical bills totaled more than \$30,000. She was worried she would become impoverished and forced to go on welfare.

In Massena, an uninsured woman suffering from cancer told me how much trouble she had finding a doctor who would treat her for free. In the MonteFiore Children's Emergency Room in the Bronx, I saw children who had come there for asthma treatments because they had no health coverage and, therefore, no doctor of their own. From Buffalo to Bay Shore, the people of New York have urged me to go to the Senate to fight for better health care.

Many of my colleagues will remember when I came to Capitol Hill 7 years ago with an idea or two about how to improve health care in our country. At that time, I was privileged to work with the Acting President pro

tempore's father, who served not only Rhode Island, but our entire country so well for so many years. We were not successful then, but I learned some valuable lessons about the legislative process, the importance of bipartisan cooperation, and the wisdom of taking small steps to get a big job done.

The Clinton-Gore administration took such steps, and with the help of both Democrats and Republicans we made progress: the Kassebaum-Kennedy Health Insurance Portability and Protection Act, the Family and Medical Leave Act, the Children's Health Insurance Program, the help we gave to young people leaving the foster care system under the Chafee bill—to give them eligibility for Medicaid health coverage through their 21st birthday, ending drive-by deliveries, mental health parity, helping to prevent breast cancer by waiving cost sharing for mammography services in the Medicare program—and providing annual screening for beneficiaries age 40 and older, advances in federally funded medical research, and the human genome project.

Even with such progress, however, there are still 40 million Americans who are uninsured. Adults with health insurance are three times more likely to receive care when they need it. People with no health insurance are 50 to 70 percent more likely to be hospitalized for routine illnesses such as pneumonia. Children with no health insurance are twice as likely to be hospitalized for illnesses such as asthma and ear infections. Americans without health insurance are 4 times more likely to seek care in emergency rooms.

It has only been 3 months since my election and 6 weeks since I was sworn in, but already I have received hundreds of letters from New Yorkers urging me to help them, their families, and their neighbors get the care and coverage they need. One such letter is from Kevin Pispisa, a Boy Scout from Troop 207 in North Babylon, whose parents are nurses. Kevin wrote to me:

It seems that the poor working class do not have the means to receive adequate health care. Some of them cannot afford to go to the doctor or pay for medication that they need.

Elsie Doetsch from Binghamton wrote to tell me about her friends who are dairy farmers. She is concerned about them because, as she writes in her letter to me:

They work every day to help put the food we eat and enjoy on our tables, yet cannot afford the "luxury" of health insurance, which I feel is a necessity for anyone in their hazardous occupation.

These letters serve as an important reminder to us all as we think about President Bush's tax cut plans and as we deliberate over the shape of our new budget. We must not forget to invest in the people we represent. We must help them find affordable quality health

care. Health insurance should not be a luxury; it should be a fact of life for Americans everywhere.

Let me be specific. We should expand the Children's Health Insurance Program. If we change the poverty threshold to include children and families with annual incomes up to 300 percent of the national poverty level and extend the program to parents of eligible children, we can provide health care to more than 5 million parents and nearly 2 million more children. Merely expanding CHIP, however, is not enough. We need to do more to encourage the enrollment of the 7 million children who are eligible for CHIP, or Medicaid.

I am very pleased that in New York, CHIP outreach efforts include radio PSAs in a number of languages, from Greek to Russian to Albanian to Creole to Chinese. We should provide a financial bonus to States that meet CHIP enrollment targets and reduce the CHIP-enhanced matching rate for States that fail to do so.

There are other creative ideas to provide greater access to health care for all Americans. As we consider them, I believe we should adhere to certain principles. First, we must develop policies that cover more uninsured Americans without encouraging businesses to drop or reduce their employees' health benefits. Second, we should make improvements to our health care system without setting up burdensome new Federal or State bureaucracies. Third, we should not penalize States such as New York that have been leaders in expanding coverage. Fourth, we should encourage flexibility for States to expand coverage while enacting strong accountability provisions so that taxpayer dollars are effectively invested.

As we work to expand health care coverage, we must also work to improve the quality of coverage. That is why it is past time to pass a meaningful Patients' Bill of Rights, and I am very pleased to be a cosponsor of the McCain-Edwards-Kennedy Patient Protection Act of 2001.

President Bush recently set out his principles for a Patients' Bill of Rights, and this legislation meets every one of them with only one exception: The President wants to preempt State laws that allow people to seek relief in State courts when they are injured by bad HMO decisions. That objection should not stand in the way of progress. I believe President Bush can transform the rhetoric of leadership into the reality of accomplishment by embracing this bipartisan patient protection act. Across this aisle and across our country, Democrats and Republicans are joined together in support of this Patients' Bill of Rights. Say the word, President Bush, and we can make this bill a law.

I appreciate the opportunity to speak today, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on improving the

health of our Nation in the context of a budget that is balanced and prudent.

I would also like to take this occasion to pay special thanks to my predecessor, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan, whose legacy of service to New York and our Nation is unparalleled and who has always been a source of inspiration, not only to me and my colleagues but to people literally around our world.

Finally, I am so grateful to the people of New York who have given me this extraordinary opportunity to serve them. Over the course of the next 6 years, I will work hard each and every day to listen to their concerns and to fight for their futures.

I thank the Chair and yield the floor.  
The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from New Mexico.

#### SENATOR CLINTON'S MAIDEN SPEECH

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I congratulate the Senator from New York on her first official speech here in the Senate. I particularly appreciate her focus on health care, a subject about which she knows a tremendous amount. Of course, she will make a great contribution in the Senate.

#### THE TAX CUT

Mr. BINGAMAN. Mr. President, I want to take a few moments to talk about the proposed tax cut that is, of course, the main focus of a lot of our attention in the Congress since the President sent us the tax cut proposal this last week, and give some thoughts as to my perspective on it at this point. I am sure that perspective will evolve as we get closer to actual consideration of the bill on the Senate floor. But I wanted to talk about how I see it at this point.

I think there are four obvious questions we need to ask about this tax cut proposal. First, should we have a tax cut? That may be the easiest question for all of us, but it is a legitimate question. Second, is the President's proposal the right size of tax cut in total, his \$1.6 trillion proposal? Third, is it structured appropriately in order to accomplish what we want to accomplish for our economy? The fourth obvious question is, does the President's proposal constitute a fair distribution of the benefits from this proposed tax cut?

Let me take a few minutes to deal with each of these. First of all, should we have a tax cut at this point in our Nation's history? To me, the answer is clearly yes. We can afford to have a tax cut because we are now projecting substantial surpluses, whereas most of the time I have served in the Senate, we have been dealing with deficits, not with surpluses. But we now have a surplus and a projected surplus; therefore, we can afford a tax cut.